

occurred in 1384. In the following February the King's hatred of his uncle took a most ominous form. The Duke had lately adopted an insolent tone at the Council Board. He had advised an expedition into France ; but the King's confidants had insisted on an invasion of Scotland. Irritated at this proof of his declining power, he declared that he would in no way assist the campaign. The King and his favourite lords, of whom the Earl of Oxford was the chief, conspired to strike a blow at the powerful man who thus defied them. The details of the plot are narrated so differently by different chroniclers, that it is impossible to say whether Eichard intended to have his uncle condemned by Tressilian for high treason, or put to death without the formality of a trial. These contradictory reports as to the exact nature of the scheme are due to the fact that it was never executed. The Duke, forewarned, took measures for his own safety, and refused to appear before his sovereign without armed attendants. At length some sort of reconciliation was effected by the King's mother.<sup>1</sup>

By this time Eichard's high-handed actions were causing widespread alarm. He had surrounded himself with a small circle of friends, and no one else was interested in his success. Proceedings like these against the greatest nobles of the land would soon drag the country into civil war. Such was the remonstrance that Archbishop Courtenay addressed to Eichard, after his plot against the Duke. The protest was the more weighty because it came from one who for both public and private reasons had long been John of Gaunt's enemy. After a stormy interview with the Primate, the King dined with Brembre, and then went out in his barge to take the air on the Thames. Between Westminster and Lambeth they met the Archbishop in a boat with the Earl of Buckingham. A conference took place on the water, in which Courtenay repeated all he had said before dinner. The King drew his sword and would have struck him, had not he been restrained by Buckingham. His vindictive passion was fully aroused. He wished to deprive the Primate of his temporalities, but Michael de la Pole had the good sense to prevent

<sup>1</sup> Wala., ii. 126 ; *Hon. Eve.*, 57 ; Higden, ix. 55-8.